

President's Message



The Branch Annual Meeting and Installation of new officers is scheduled via ZOOM on Saturday, May 8 at 11 :00. I hope you will join us to say goodbye to the current board and to vote in the new board. A list of the candidates has been sent to you earlier via an e-blast. Although we are still unable to meet in person, we will be able to see each other, and visit in smaller breakout rooms after the vote has been taken.

Thank you, thank you current Directors. Your dedication has been remarkable. You have worked effectively to help our organization hold together through this disastrous COVID year. Thank you to the new slate of Board candidates who are stepping up to continue our community activities.

A reminder that it is time to renew your membership. You should have already received your membership renewal notice via email. If you have questions, please contact Patty McHugh, current Membership Director.

The AAUW National Election voting period ends Monday, May 17. You are asked to vote on an amendment to remove the degree requirement for membership, which I strongly support. Whatever your decision, it is important to vote so your voice is heard. If you seek additional information, search AAUW National Election. I look forward to seeing you on May 8.

-Kate Van Ness

Political Action News



“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

-Anne Frank

Public Policy Committee

March Madness (Lobby Day)

On March 24th, members of your Public Policy Committee participated in the first-ever virtual California State Lobby Day. We joined AAUW members from across California to advocate for legislation impacting women. Here are a few highlights from Lobby Day:

- 111 AAUW members representing 68 branches attended advocacy training and participated in virtual meetings with legislators.
- 36 Assembly and 23 Senate legislators were visited by our members.
- Healdsburg AAUW members met with staff from Assembly Member Jim Woods and Assembly Member Lisa Calderon (Women’s Caucus).

We advocated for three pieces of legislation sponsored and supported by AAUW:

- Assembly Bill 92 – Child Care Family Fees (Affordability of Childcare for Working Families)
- Senate Bill 373 – Economic Abuse (Financial Abuse and Domestic Violence)
- Senate Bill 62 – Garment Worker Protection Act (Strengthening Protection of Garment Workers)

Advocacy Accomplishments and Opportunities:

We Did It! Paycheck Fairness Act Passes the House

On April 15th, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 217 to 210 to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act with bipartisan support—a stunning victory in the fight for fair pay. Next we’ll need to [mobilize support](#) to get the legislation through the Senate. With you on our side, this is the year we’ll do it!

Take Action to Secure Paid Sick Leave

More than 32 million private-sector workers—nearly one-third of the workforce—don't have access to paid sick days. For women, who often act as primary caregivers, the inability to earn paid sick days can have particularly devastating consequences. Tell Congress to [pass the Healthy Families Act](#), which would provide full-time employees the right to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days a year.

Help fight for equal pay, family leave, stopping sexual harassment, equality in education, and more. Sign up to get regular alerts to be able to take timely action.

Become a 2-Minute Activist: [AAUW: Take Action \(everyaction.com\)](#)

-Rebecca La Londe

Social Programs

Scholarship Success Stories

Chelsea Ridgway's Story

2017 recipient of the AAUW Healdsburg Branch SRJC Scholarship



My name is Chelsea Ridgway, and I was the lucky recipient of the AAUW scholarship four years ago. I cannot believe that so much time has gone by, but I have not forgotten the generosity of the incredible women who make up the Healdsburg branch of AAUW.

Looking back on the past four years is exhilarating. When I was interviewed for the AAUW scholarship, I was working multiple jobs to put myself through nursing school. Later that term, I graduated from Santa Rosa Junior College's Registered Nursing program with a 4.0 GPA and had four job offers lined up before taking the national licensing boards. I took a night shift position at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital on their cardiac/stroke telemetry unit. The scholarship allowed me to complete Sonoma State University's "bridge" program to earn my BSN. I was working full time, 12-hour night shifts and attending classes during the day while also completing clinical hours through Saint Joseph Hospice to earn my Public Health Certificate. Working full time while simultaneously going to school full time was a huge challenge, but I was determined to maintain my 4.0 GPA, so I worked hard and ended up graduating top of my class with straight As.

Within 10 months of my nursing career, I was nominated by previous patients and received a "Daisy Award", which

is something I had always dreamt of receiving someday. Shortly after that, I was hired into the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital. I work amongst some of the most amazing techs, nurses and doctors who routinely save the lives of people having acute heart attacks. I cannot believe how lucky I am to work with such incredible people who have taken me under their wing and taught me so much.

During the Sonoma County fires and the Covid-19 pandemic, I have witnessed true heroism as I worked alongside my coworkers who lost homes hours before performing emergency procedures or with limited PPE while working to save a life. I am so proud to be where I am. In the past few months, I purchased my first home completely on my own and I continue to advance my career with continuing education. I cannot believe there was a time when I had to consider dropping out of my Bachelors program because of finances. I was doing everything I could to stay afloat but was struggling to pay tuition at SSU. The scholarship I received from the women at AAUW Healdsburg helped me to get back on my feet before starting my first nursing job and allowed me to pay for the required classes and books in order to stay enrolled in the program. I think about the generosity of AAUW often and feel beyond blessed that I had the opportunity to meet and interview with such incredible women. I strive to be an inspiration and support system to other women the way AAUW was, and still is, to me.

(Editor's Note - I take great pride in having the honor to publish Nurse Ridgway's story - one which truly highlights the success of our scholarship efforts. Congratulations Nurse Ridgway!!! You are a rock star!) -Donna Riley

Friday Hikes



I will be starting a short hiking group on Fridays. Please contact me if interested. denalash@gmail.com or 707 486 5924 for questions.

-Dena Lash

Membership

AAUW Member Spotlight

Linda Clark



Linda Clark is the epitome of a dedicated AAUW member. She is involved, friendly, outgoing, and goes out of her way to include new members, helping them become a part of the organization. She has held the offices of Communications Director, Vice President, and President, and is currently on the board as Past President. I like to say that I would not be the Director of Mission Based Programs if I had not been in a book club with Linda Clark, and I know many people feel the same way about their involvement as well.

Linda and her husband Dick settled in St. Paul, MN after graduating from the University of Nebraska with a BS in Chemistry. She honed her great organizational skills as one of the first Clinical Laboratory Scientists. After receiving an MBA from the University of St. Thomas, she moved into hospital administration in laboratories as well as an Urgent Care Center and a hospital emergency room. This was while she was raising three children, doing 5K races, and joining Dick on weeklong bike adventures. After their children were grown, they decided to leave the Minnesota snow and moved to our beautiful wine country, settling in Windsor ten years ago. She quickly joined AAUW for bridge, hiking, and the fun of meeting new people, and especially because the Mission resonated with her.

Linda's amazing organizational skills are put to good use in AAUW. She is the spreadsheet and Zoom queen, organizing our Board Zoom meetings, her many online bridge games, as well as her book club Zoom meetings. As president, she brought the idea of a mentor program to our branch, as well as an emphasis on striving for equal pay for women, as well as looking at diversity in our branch.

Whether she is delivering food for a member in need, making a caring phone call, or organizing a virtual happy hour, Linda is always there for our members. Thank you, Linda, for all you do for AAUW Healdsburg.

-Beth Wolk

Anita Forchini, Charter Member



Anita passed away on March 23 after spending a week in ICU. She suffered from a brain hemorrhage after being in poor health for four months. She was a helpful participant in forming our Healdsburg AAUW beginning group.

We became friends through AAUW and enjoyed morning chit-chats at my house whenever she came into town from Dry Creek.

Anita assisted her husband, Jim at Forchini Winery, raised three children, and participated in many other civic activities.

-Jean Short

If you are aware of any member who is ill, has had an operation or an accident, has passed away or had a close family member pass away, please notify Heidi Blumenthal so that a card can be sent to the person or family from AAUW. Email - heidiblu@aol.com. Phone - 707 433 7445.

The Grapevine is published online each month, except in July and August. Please submit articles and announcements in WORD or PAGES in Calibri font 12 pt, justified, and photographs in Jpeg by the 15th of the month prior to the issue in which you want them included. Remember that the Grapevine is available to the general public, so be cautious about including your personal information. Send to Donna Riley at dldrldh@gmail.com.